THE SCIENCE OF THE BOOK IN THE DECISIVE SPEECH

The Identity of the Speaker in the Heavenly Texts – A Structural Study on the Limits of Comparison between the Qur'an and the Bible

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Table of Contents

1. **Abstract** ..... Page 04
2. **Introduction** ..... Page 04
3. **Problem Statement** ..... Page 05
4. **Clarifying the Meaning of "The Word of God"** ..... Page 05
5. **Research Question .....** Page 06
6. **Methodology.....** Page 06
7. **Comparative and Structural Analysis** ..... Page 07
8. **The Apparent Similarity Between Some Biblical and Qur'anic Verses** ..... Page 10
9. **Applied Example**..... Page 11
10. **Findings** ..... Page 13
11. **Recommendations** ..... Page 13
12. **The Foundation of the Science of Speaker Identity**…… Page 15
13. **Conclusion** ..... Page 16

Abstract

{Say, O People of the Book! Come to a word that is equitable between us and you: That we shall worship none but Allah, and that we shall not associate anything with Him, and that none of us shall take others as lords beside Allah.} (Qur'an – Āl ʿImrān: 64)

This book investigates a fundamental methodological flaw prevalent in the common approach to comparing the Qur'an with the scriptures of the People of the Book — namely, the Jews and Christians — particularly as represented in the modern Bible. It argues that the central issue lies not in the weakness of traditional polemics or the absence of original manuscripts, but in the failure to address a foundational question: **Who is the speaker?**

Whereas the Qur'an — according to Islamic belief — is the preserved and unified Word of God, consistent in voice, language, and authorship, the Bible presents a multilayered textual structure, containing a mixture of narrative, interpretation, and historical commentary. These diverse voices, often without clear attribution, obscure the identity of the original speaker. This book proposes a new analytical paradigm: one that abandons the flawed assumption of textual equivalence and instead centers interfaith dialogue on the structural analysis of voice and authorship — the science of the speaker's identity.

Introduction

Despite the abundance of religious debates, few offer genuine insight or lead to constructive outcomes. The frequent reliance on superficial similarities between sacred texts often collapses under the weight of deeper structural and theological differences. In today's world, interfaith dialogue has too often become a platform for religious self-promotion, rather than a pursuit of truth rooted in methodological integrity.

A central flaw in many Muslim-Christian or Muslim-Jewish discussions is the underlying presumption that all texts attributed to divine revelation are equal in nature and authority, and that they can therefore be directly compared. But this assumption neglects the essential question of authorship: **Is the speaker in these texts truly God? And if so, is His voice preserved and distinct?**

The Qur'an, in the view of Muslims, is a coherent and preserved divine discourse — unaltered in wording or meaning, and issued from a single speaker with a known identity: Allah. Even secular critics of Islam generally acknowledge the Qur'an's stylistic unity and textual integrity. By contrast, the Bible — in both its Old and New Testaments — is a compilation of heterogeneous writings,

produced over centuries by multiple and mostly anonymous authors. It merges divine references with human narrations, legal codes with historical retrospectives, and prophetic utterances with editorial commentary — making it difficult to identify a continuous divine voice throughout.

Thus, what remains today is not the original Torah revealed to Moses nor the Gospel revealed to Jesus (peace be upon them), but rather a composite text that includes fragments of revelation interwoven with human interpretation.

1. Problem Statement

The modern Bible, in both its Old and New Testaments, cannot be classified as a purely divine text. Rather, it is a complex anthology of writings spanning different historical periods, composed by multiple authors — most of whom remain unidentified. These texts blend elements of supposed revelation with narrative exposition and theological reflection, making it nearly impossible to distinguish the direct speech of God from human elaboration.

The majority of contemporary religious debates overlook this foundational distinction. They proceed on the implicit — yet deeply flawed — assumption that all religious texts bearing claims of divinity are structurally and ontologically comparable. However, such an approach ignores the internal composition and transmission history of each scripture. The Qur'an maintains a consistent voice attributed directly to God, supported by a clear historical chain of preservation. In contrast, the Bible lacks this consistency and clarity, both in speaker identity and textual integrity.

This misalignment in textual nature leads to false equivalence, distorting the reality of revelation and undermining any serious comparative analysis. Addressing this flaw is critical — not only for Muslims seeking to articulate their theological position, but also for non-Muslims seeking to understand the basis of Islamic rejection of texts that merge divine attribution with human authorship.

2. Clarifying the Meaning of "The Word of God"

In Islam, the "Word of God" is not merely a spiritual concept or an expression of faith. It is divine revelation — sent down by God, in both its words and meanings, through the Angel Gabriel (Jibril), to the Prophet Muhammad □.
It has been preserved exactly as it was revealed, without any addition or omission, in the Arabic language. While translations can aid understanding, they are not considered the Qur'an itself, but rather interpretations of its meanings.

Therefore:

If even a single word is inserted from other than God, the text is no longer considered divine speech.

Interpreting God's words using human input = demoting the text from the level of revelation to the level of commentary.

The Qur’an alone is used in acts of worship and prayer; it is the only text that is fully accepted and never challenged. It cannot be mixed with any other type of speech — not even with Hadith Qudsi (Divine speech revealed through Gabriel but not part of the Qur’an), nor with the authentic sayings of the Prophet □, nor with classical exegeses such as those of al-Ṭabarī, al-Saʿdī, or Ibn Kathīr.

The Qur’an stands as the undivided and unrivaled speech of God. So how can one compare it to a book like the Bible — a text of multiple voices and unknown narrators?

3. Research Question

This paper is driven by a central research question:

"Can a meaningful comparison be made between a text delivered by a known, singular speaker and a text in which multiple voices appear without clear attribution to the divine speaker?"

From this core question emerge two supporting inquiries:

– What are the criteria by which a text can be authentically attributed to God, rather than to a narrator or interpreter?
– How does the absence of a clearly defined speaker affect the validity of comparing such a text to a preserved revelation like the Qur’an?

4. Methodology

This paper adopts a **structural-differentiation methodology**, which focuses on uncovering the following elements within sacred texts:

1. **Speaker identity:** Is the speaker God, a prophet, a narrator, or an unknown writer?
   Unification of textual voice: Does the text speak with a single, consistent voice, or does it contain multiple layers of narration?

2. **Structural composition:** Is the text a direct legislative discourse, or a historical/interpretive narrative?
   Preservation and transmission: Is there an unbroken chain of transmission, or unverified historical gaps?
   Ritual and doctrinal usage: Is the text used in worship and legislation, or is it limited to commentary and narrative?

This methodology will be applied to selected examples from:

- The Qur'an.
- The Bible (both Testaments).
- And certain Islamic exegetical works whose structure resembles that of the Bible in order to highlight the difference between a "revealed text" and a "compiled text."

5. Comparative and Structural Analysis

Structural Analysis: A Comparison between the Qur'an and the Bible:

Structural analysis reveals that the flaw in comparing the Qur'an with the Bible does not stem from theological differences, but from a fundamental divergence in the nature and construction of the texts themselves. The comparison assumes that the Qur'an and the Bible stand as equal counterparts, when in reality, one is a preserved, direct divine discourse, while the other is a composite text—a mixture of alleged divine and human voices, with no clear attribution to a singular speaker.

First: Examples from the Bible (Old and New Testaments)

● **Example 1:** Genesis – Chapter 1
"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth…" The narrative then proceeds in the voice of an absent narrator describing God's actions, without attributing the speech to God directly — until it later states:
"And God said: Let there be light."

❖ The problem here:
Who was speaking before "God said"?
Who is this narrator? A prophet? A scribe? An unknown author?

● **Example 2:** Gospel of Matthew – Chapter 5
“Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain… and he opened his mouth and taught them, saying…”
Then Jesus begins to speak directly: “Blessed are the poor in spirit…”
But nowhere does the text say: “God said” or “God revealed to Jesus.”
The passage is presented as though Jesus is speaking on his own, with no divine attribution or revelation framework.

❖ The problem here:
Is this revelation? Is it personal teaching?
Was it written during Jesus’s lifetime or decades later?

● **Example 3:** Deuteronomy

In the Book of Deuteronomy, we observe a clear structural ambiguity and confusion in the speaker’s identity across several passages. The text begins with an anonymous narrator stating:

”…These are the words that Moses spoke to all Israel“
(Deuteronomy 1:1)

The voice then shifts to direct speech addressing “Israel” in the singular form:

”…Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you“
(Deuteronomy 4:1)

This raises a question: is “Israel” here a reference to the prophet Jacob? Are these divine commandments addressed to Jacob from God? Or is Moses addressing the collective people of Israel?

Soon after, the text presents what appears to be a divine speech quoted by Moses:

The Lord said to me: Gather the people to Me, and I will let them hear My “
”…words
(Deuteronomy 4:10)

Here, the divine voice seems to be mediated, but without clear narrative demarcation. Is this Moses reporting God's words? Or is the divine voice speaking directly through him?

Finally, following the death of Moses, the narration returns to a third-person anonymous voice:

"…So Moses the servant of the Lord died there"
(Deuteronomy 34:5)

All of these transitions occur without structural markers, narrative framing, or clear distinctions between the voices of the narrator, the prophet, and God. This results in a blurring of vocal layers and instability in speaker identity within the sacred text. The lack of consistency compromises the textual clarity and raises theological and structural concerns about the nature of revelation in the biblical tradition.

Second: Examples from the Qur'an

● **Example 1:** Sūrat Ṭā Hā – verse 14
{Indeed, I am Allah. There is no deity except Me, so worship Me.}
There is absolute clarity in the speaker's identity:
God introduces Himself directly — no narrator, no historian, no intermediary.

● **Example 2:** Sūrat al-Isrā' – verse 88

{Say: If mankind and the jinn were to gather…}
The speech is directly attributed to God through the command "Say,"
one of the most frequently used forms in the Qur'an, affirming that the speaker is God Himself.

Third: The problem of "the identity of the speaker" in the Bible

While the books are attributed to God, the speech within them is conveyed through **multiple, conflicting voices**:
anonymous writers, prophets, messengers, disciples, kings, and historians.

At times the text declares, “Thus says the Lord,” only to be followed a few lines later by purely human historical narration. These layered voices and shifts in tone and source make it **impossible to establish the entire text as pure, uninterrupted revelation**.

6. The Apparent Similarity Between Some Biblical and Qur’anic Verses

Indeed, there are verses that appear similar between the Qur’an and the Bible, for example:

- {Do not approach unlawful sexual intercourse.} (Qur’an – al-Isrā’: 32)
  ⇔“You shall not commit adultery.” (Bible – Exodus 20:14)
- {Say: He is Allah, [who is] One.} (Qur’an – al-Ikhlāṣ: 1)
  ⇔“The Lord our God, the Lord is one.” (Bible -Deuteronomy 6:4)
- {We ordained for them in it: a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a nose for a nose, an ear for an ear, a tooth for a tooth...} (Qur’an – al-Mā’idah: 45)
  ⇔“An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth...” (Bible -Exodus 21:24–25)
- {There is no deity except You. Exalted are You.} (Qur’an – al-Anbiyā’: 87)
  ⇔“There is no god but You, O Lord.” (Bible -Sirach 36)

However, this does not indicate that the entire Bible is preserved in its original form. Rather, it suggests that some remnants of previous revelation remain embedded within it and align with the Qur’an. This is consistent with what al-Najāshī (The Negus of Abyssinia, the king of Ethiopia and he was a Christian.) affirmed when he heard the recitation of Sūrat Maryam form The Qur’an: “Indeed, what you have recited and what Jesus brought come from the same source of light.” In other words, pure revelation, when heard, is recognized by its divine clarity, if we had access to authentic versions of the scriptures that God revealed to all of His prophets before the Qur’an was revealed, we would find that their content matches exactly what *is* found in the Qur’an—because the source of the speech in all of them is one: God, the Almighty.

7. Applied Example from the Methodology: Structural Analysis of the Voice in the Story of Joseph (Peace Be Upon Him)

A Comparative Study Between the Qur’an, Islamic Tafsir, and the Bible:

This example provides a structural analysis of the speaker’s voice in one of the most well-known prophetic narratives: the story of **Joseph (Yūsuf), peace be upon him**. The objective is to examine how the narrative is presented in three different sources — the **Qur’an**, the **Islamic exegesis (tafsir)**, and the **Bible** — and to

uncover the fundamental differences in terms of **speaker identity**, **narrative structure**, and **the source of authority** within each text.

First: In the Qur'an – The Voice of God in Direct Revelation *(Sūrat Yūsuf)*

{Kill Joseph or cast him out to [some] land; the face of your father will then be only for you…} (verse 9)
{So they agreed to put him into the bottom of the well…} (verse 15)
{They said, 'O our father, we went racing each other and left Joseph with our belongings, and a wolf ate him…'} (verse 17)

- The narrative unfolds through the **direct voice of God**, without any human narrator, historian, or interpreter.
- God reveals the intentions of Joseph's brothers, their plot, and their psychological motivations with precision and insight no human author could achieve.

- The text is **unified in source**, **divine in nature**, and **solely attributed to Allah**.

Second: In Tafsir (Exegesis) – Ibn Kathir as an Example:

{Kill Joseph or cast him out to [some] land; the face of your father will then be only for you…}

Ibn Kathir comments on the verses:

"They consulted each other about Joseph and said: 'Kill him or cast him away in a distant land…' It is said that the one who said 'Do not kill Joseph' was Reuben, and he advised: 'Throw him into the bottom of the well…'"
"Then they came to their father in the evening weeping, and said, 'O our father, we went racing and left Joseph with our belongings, and a wolf ate him.' They brought his shirt stained with false blood…"

In this example, **multiple voices emerge**:

- The voice of the **commentator** (Ibn Kathir).
- The voices of **narrators** such as **al-Suddī** and **Ka'b al-Aḥbār**.
- Traces of **biblical traditions** (*isrā'īliyyāt*) and non-Qur'anic reports.

While the divine verse exists in the background, it is **overtaken by commentary, historical interpretation, and explanatory detail**.

Result: The voice of revelation becomes **blurred**, and the narrative transforms into a layered human construction where the divine voice is no longer distinct.

Third: In the Bible – Genesis 37:18–22

"When they saw him from a distance and before he reached them, they plotted to kill him. They said to one another, 'Here comes this dreamer! Now then, come and let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits…'
But Reuben said, 'Do not shed blood. Throw him into this pit in the wilderness, but do not lay a hand on him.'"

Structural Analysis:

- The story is narrated by a **third-person human narrator**, not by God.
- The events, feelings, and speech of the characters are conveyed without any **divine commentary**.
- Joseph is not presented as a prophet, but merely as a **troubled dreamer** in the eyes of his brothers.
- There is **no mention of revelation**, divine intent, or sacred insight.

Conclusion: The biblical account is a **human literary story**. The voice of God is entirely absent, and the text resembles **historical fiction** rather than sacred revelation.

Structural Conclusion:

This comparative model clearly demonstrates that, structurally, the Bible is closer to Islamic tafsir literature than to the Qur'an itself. The Qur'an maintains a single, direct, and divine voice throughout all its chapters, whereas both tafsir and the Bible present a multiplicity of human voices. Therefore, any comparison between the Qur'an and the Bible is fundamentally flawed, as the Bible does not present itself as a unified revelation from a single divine source.

People of the Book claim that the Bible is the Word of God simply because it contains parts they believe to be divine. Yet Muslims never consider tafsir — even when it includes verses from the Qur'an — to be the Word of God itself.
So how can a Muslim be asked to accept that the Bible is the Word of God, when its structure more closely resembles tafsir than it does revelation?

Accordingly, the Bible — even if it contains remnants of revelation — cannot be considered equivalent to the Qur'an, which is characterized by a pure, direct, and unmediated divine voice, untouched by narrators or human authors.

8. Findings

1. **The Qur'an is a structurally unique text**: It maintains a single, uninterrupted divine voice across all chapters. The speaker is always God, and the style is consistent in tone, authority, and source.
2. **Tafsir literature is not revelation**: Though it may quote the Qur'an, tafsir is composed by human scholars, and includes interpretations, historical narrations, and theological opinions. Muslims do not consider it to be divine revelation.
3. **The Bible is structurally closer to tafsir than to the Qur'an**: Its content shifts between narrative, prophecy, law, poetry, and personal letters. The identity of the speaker changes constantly — sometimes God, sometimes prophets, and often unknown writers.
4. **The Bible includes remnants of revelation**: But these remnants are embedded within layers of human authorship. This mixture disqualifies it from being viewed as a unified divine discourse.
5. **The Qur'an alone preserves the pure voice of God**: It is the only widely available religious text today that presents itself — and is treated by its followers — as the direct speech of God without narrative mediation.

9. Recommendations

1. **Any comparison between the Qur'an and the Bible must begin by defining the nature of each text**. The Qur'an is a preserved divine revelation; the Bible is a historical compilation. Failing to distinguish between the two leads to false equivalency.
2. **The Vatican Apostolic Archive must be opened to scholars and the public.** It is recommended that the Vatican grant full access to the Vatican Apostolic Archive, allowing researchers and the public to examine its contents. This archive is believed to contain ancient manuscripts and non-canonical gospels that may shed light on early scriptural traditions—some of which could reveal closer parallels to the Qur'an. The continued restriction of these documents obstructs scholarly efforts to accurately compare the Bible and the Qur'an. Without complete access to all historical sources, especially those potentially excluded from the canon, any comparison remains methodologically compromised and the claim of scriptural equivalency remains unsubstantiated.

3. **Theological debates should focus on the source of speech**: Who is speaking in the text? Is it God, a prophet, a historian, or an unknown narrator? Identifying the voice is important as analyzing content.
4. **The adoption of the Science of Speaker Identity** as an independent academic field within religious studies is essential. This science is concerned with analyzing the attributed sources of speech within so-called divine texts—distinguishing between the voice of God and that of prophets, interpreters, historians, or unknown narrators. It is recommended that this field be integrated into the methodologies of Qur'anic exegesis, Biblical studies, and contemporary religious criticism.
5. **There is a need to develop a new science of scriptural voice analysis**, which investigates the internal identity of the speaker in religious texts. This field can expose structural deception and trace authenticity through voice continuity.

10.The Foundation of the Science of Speaker Identity

The Question of Voice, the Origin of Speech, and the Structure of the Speaker in Sacred Texts.

Chapter Introduction:

The question "Who is the speaker?" has long been absent—or deliberately overlooked—in many religious and exegetical studies, despite being the foundational gateway to understanding the text, verifying its source, and distinguishing divine revelation from human or historical discourse.

This study places that question at the center of analysis and builds upon it a new science whose function is to uncover the identity of the speaker and the nature of the voice within texts attributed to revelation—be they Qur'anic, Biblical, exegetical, or historical.

We name this discipline:

“The Science of Speaker Identity”

I. Definition of the Discipline:

The Science of Speaker Identity is an analytical field concerned with examining the vocal structure of a text to identify the true speaker within it, and to distinguish divine discourse from human narration. This science serves as a methodological tool to uncover the source of authority in religious texts by analyzing the coherence of voice, its transitions, and its narrative layers., and rhetorical function in order to determine:

- Is the speaker God?
- A prophet receiving revelation?
- A narrator, companion, jurist?
- Or perhaps a later historian or anonymous source?

This science begins from a central question:
"Who is the speaker? How can we identify their voice? And is it possible to distinguish their voice from others within the text?"

II. Importance of the Science

1. Distinguishing Revelation from Interpretation
   Texts cannot be assumed to be purely divine without verifying their speaker.
2. Deconstructing Composite Texts especially in exegetical works and the Bible, where voices intertwine—divine, prophetic, narrative, editorial.
3. Reviving Critical Reading within faith this science does not negate sanctity; it purifies it from voices that do not belong to it.
4. Establishing a New Hermeneutics an interpretative method that begins not with meaning or context, but with the structure of voice.

III. The Relationship Between This Science and Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics is the science of interpretation and understanding of texts.
But the Science of Speaker Identity represents a unique form of hermeneutics: it does not begin with
"What does the text mean?"
but rather:
"Who is speaking in the text? Is it really the attributed speaker?"

It is a form of interpretation that starts with the voice, not the meaning.
For the "voice" carries with it authority, position, and divine or human authorship.
Through voice analysis, we reconstruct the relationship between speaker, listener, transmitter, and interpreter.

IV. Tools of the Science of Speaker Identity

1. Voice Structure Analysis
   Who is speaking? Who is being addressed? Is there a narrator? Does the speech shift between layers?
2. Deconstruction of Internal Context
   When does the first-person pronoun appear? Does it refer to God, a prophet, or a narrator?

3. Differentiation of Voice Patterns
    - Divine Speech: commands, the unseen, creation, promises, warnings.
    - Prophetic Speech: proclamation, calling, dialogue.
    - Human Speech: interpretation, supplication, narration.
4. Comparative Textual Analysis to observe recurring or shifting voices across texts.

V. The Future of the Discipline

- Institutionalizing it as an independent academic Religion Universities and theological seminaries.
- Including it within interfaith and comparative religion studies.
- Applying it in new approaches to Qur'anic interpretation and modern critical reading of sacred texts and the Bible.

Chapter Conclusion:

It is time for this science to emerge into the light—transcending the static traditions that blurred the line between God's voice and human speech, or that accepted narration without questioning its source.

The Science of Speaker Identity does not cast doubt on revelation; it purifies it from contamination, elevates its pure authority, and returns the compass of religious inquiry to the essential question of voice:

Who is the speaker? How did they speak? And is the voice we have before us truly theirs—or someone else's?

10. Conclusion

This Book has argued that the fundamental flaw in most interfaith comparisons lies not in the doctrinal content, but in the structural nature of the texts being compared. The Qur'an is a direct revelation — unified in voice, divine in origin, and preserved in form. In contrast, the Bible is a human compilation, containing traces of revelation interwoven with commentary, storytelling, and unknown authorship.

We have shown through both theoretical and applied analysis — particularly the example of Joseph (peace be upon him) — that the identity of the speaker is the key element in evaluating the authority of a religious text. Any comparison between the Qur'an and the Bible that ignores this dimension is not just inaccurate, but methodologically unsound.

The question is not only what the text says, but also: Who is speaking? And unless the answer is consistently: “God,”
then the text cannot stand on equal footing with the Qur’an.

There is no argument for those who do not know: “Who is the speaker?”